



About this fact sheet

Massage therapists, remedial massage therapists and myotherapists (professional qualified therapists) often fill the gap when patients seek alternatives to medications and other therapies because they feel that remedial massage therapy and myotherapy provides a level of relief that is appropriate to their needs.

While a proportion of remedial massage therapy and myotherapy treatments are initiated by patients self-directing their care, many appointments are initiated through a referral from a registered medical practitioner such as a GP, or an allied health practitioner.

Remedial massage therapy and myotherapy is not a cure for disease, injury or chronic condition. However, they can provide relief from pain and stress, improve mobility and help rehabilitation and recovery. Patients should always seek medical advice first when new conditions or pain arises.

The following will assist you in understanding what a professional qualified therapist is, and how the appropriate training, experience and skills can help in maintaining or restoring a level of health and wellbeing.

Ensure your professional therapist has qualifications recognised under the AQF

Appropriate qualifications are attained in Australia and recognised in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

An appropriate Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Bachelor Degree can be obtained through private provider RTOs (Registered Training Organisations) TAFE, Colleges or Universities.

Massage therapist

- » Certificate IV in Massage Therapy Practice (HLT42021) is an entry level qualification for professional association membership.

Remedial massage therapist

Higher qualifications provide more advanced training in a broader range of conditions and corresponding massage modalities.

- » Diploma of Remedial Massage (HLT52021).

Myotherapist

Qualifications in Myotherapy are obtained under the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (which is also taught in other states and territories):

- » Advanced Diploma of Myotherapy (Myotherapy 22656VIC)

Undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications

- » Bachelor of Health Science (Clinical Myotherapy BHSCMYO13)
- » Some massage therapists hold a graduate or post-graduate degree in health science.

Qualifications and training equip therapists to treat certain conditions

Like all healthcare qualifications, the level achieved, alongside additional training, defines the complexity of conditions that a professional therapist is qualified to treat.

This hierarchy of qualifications in relation to the complexity of treatable conditions is listed in Table 1 below.

Unless they have undertaken additional units of study, the table illustrates that those with a Certificate IV are qualified to treat clients for issues such as stress and relaxation, muscular tears, and postural dysfunction.

Therapists with diploma level or higher qualifications are trained to offer services that provide relief for a wider range of dysfunction and pain/chronic pain, and muscular strain conditions.

The advanced diploma or degree provides training to address neural tension, reduced fitness and reduced strength, and complex musculoskeletal dysfunction.



Qualifications in relation to treatable conditions

Increasingly, therapists work on clients with complex and/or multiple conditions.

Qualified therapists generally use an integrated approach, drawing on a variety of techniques and adjunct services to address the symptoms of debilitating conditions.

During 2023, Massage & Myotherapy Australia undertook its second 10-year Practitioners' Survey of its 8,650 members. Table 1 presents the recorded reason for remedial massage therapy or myotherapy treatments and the average number of sessions for a given condition, noting that this can vary depending on a client's individual circumstances.

Condition	Advanced Diploma or Degree	Diploma	Cert IV	Average No. of Treatment Sessions
Stress	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.7
Relaxation	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.3
Tension	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.3
Headaches	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.3
Muscular tears	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.2
Postural dysfunction	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.8
Neck dysfunction and pain	Yes	Yes		4.2
Thoracic dysfunction and pain	Yes	Yes		4.5
Lumbar dysfunction and pain	Yes	Yes		4.5
Sacroiliac dysfunction and pain	Yes	Yes		4.2
Shoulder dysfunction and pain	Yes	Yes		4.2
Hip dysfunction and pain	Yes	Yes		5.4
Tendonitis/Tendinopathy	Yes	Yes		5.3
Muscular strain	Yes	Yes		4.5
Reduced range of motion	Yes	Yes		4.5
Palliative conditions such as cancer	Yes	Yes		4.7
Neural tension	Yes			4.5
Reduced fitness	Yes			4.4
Reduced strength	Yes			6.6

Table 1. Hierarchy of conditions in relation to massage qualification and training

Integrating training with eastern and western massage modalities

Importantly, professional association membership does not discriminate. All legitimate forms of massage therapy are recognised.

Table 2 below lists the hierarchy of modalities in relation to qualifications involving the different types of treatments.

Approaches	Massage Therapist (Cert IV level)	Remedial Massage Therapist (Diploma level)	Advanced Practitioner
Direct	Swedish Therapeutic Relaxation	Deep Tissue Massage	Manual Lymphatic Drainage
		Manual Lymphatic Drainage	Musculoskeletal Therapy
		Muscle Energy Technique	Myofascial Dry Needling
		Myofascial Release	Myotherapy
		Positional Release Technique	Neuromuscular
		Trigger Point	Traditional Chinese
			Oncology Massage
Integrated	Aromatherapy Touch for Health	Shiatsu	Exercise Physiology
		Clinical Aromatherapy	Cranio Sacral Therapy
		Bowen	Alexander Technique
		Myofascial Release	Feldenkrais
			Manual Lymphatic Drainage
	Rolfing		
Eastern	Shiatsu Thai	Shiatsu	Shiatsu
		Thai	Thai
		Traditional Chinese Tui Na	Chinese Tui Na
		Chinese Acupressure	Chinese Acupressure

Table 2. Hierarchy of modalities in relation to qualification



Funding is available for professional therapy services

Professional therapists usually have 'Approved Provider' status under a number of government funded care programs. Current funding arrangements that help patients access professional qualified therapists include:

- » [SIRA NSW](#)
- » [WorkSafe Vic](#)
- » [WorkSafe SA](#)
- » [WorkSafe Tas](#)
- » [National Aged In-home Care Package](#)
- » [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#)
- » [Private Health Insurance Rebates](#)
- » [Seacare](#) (Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Authority)

Professional qualified therapists and myotherapists also fill the gap when self-funded clients seek alternatives to medications and other therapies because they feel that remedial massage therapy and myotherapy provides a level of relief that is appropriate to their needs.

More information

Massage therapy may or may not be right for everyone; no two patients will respond in the same way, and no two massage therapists will provide exactly the same massage:

- » [Australian Massage Directory](#) – find a professional qualified local therapist
- » [Massage & Myotherapy Australia](#) website – consumer section
- » [Australian Government Health Directory](#) – free health advice
- » [US Department of Health and Services](#) – massage therapy - what you need to know.